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Despite U.S.-backed Israeli massacre Palestinians resist Under mass pressure, Arab League to send aid

By Leslie Feinberg

Washington's Nov. 11 veto in the United Nations Security Council blocked an Arab-backed resolution censuring Tel Aviv for the massacre of civilians in Beit Hanoun. This veto proves that not a single Israeli artillery shell could slam into a Palestinian neighborhood without U.S. imperialism providing political cover, military supplies, virtually unlimited bankrolling and monopoly media manipulation.

Yet the Palestinian struggle for self-determination, sovereignty and the right to return to their historic land continues to rage, igniting fiery solidarity throughout the Arab and Muslim world.

Anger at the bloody Israeli siege of terror that began Nov. 1 in the northern Gaza Strip is building—from Sana'a to Alexandria, Nablus to Los Angeles—and it is volatile.

Fifteen hundred unarmed Palestinian women broke an Israeli military siege in Beit Hanoun on Nov. 3, despite taking casualties when troops opened fire.

The day after Israeli tank cannons fired a prolonged barrage of shells into a residential neighborhood there on Nov. 8, tens of thousands of Palestinians marched through the narrow, rubble-strewn streets, hoisting the bodies of loved ones—babies and children, men and women, wrapped in fabric flags of Palestinian nationhood and resistance. They fired gunshots to punctuate the fury of their chants against Tel Aviv and Washington, as two Israeli military drones buzzed the funeral procession overhead.

Palestinians protested across their homeland that weekend, despite the intensified mobilization of occupier military and police forces. In the West Bank city of Hebron, Israeli occupation forces fired gas and stun grenades at Palestinians who reportedly fought back by hurling concrete blocks and bottles.

Several hundred Palestinian youths skirmished with police Nov. 10, when they tried to march to the Haram al Sharif (Noble Sanctuary) in east Jerusalem, to demonstrate solidarity with Beit Hanoun.

In the face of such resistance, and the anti-imperialist anger burning like a wildfire in the Middle East, even imperialist politicians were forced to pay lip service to civilian lives lost on Nov. 8.

The White House and State Department called for restraint—by the Palestinians. Bush expressed “sadness” about the deaths. The European Union said it was “appalled” but declined to chastise Israel.

Attributing the artillery strike on the neighborhood to a technical glitch, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's statement resounded clearly as a threat: “I think it would not be serious to promise that it may not happen. It may happen.”

Olmert arrived in the United States Nov. 12 for a five-day, post-election meeting with the White House. The agenda, according to an Associated Press report, included “U.S. policy on Iran and Iraq.”

Protests were set to meet Olmert in Los Angeles on Nov. 14. There an impressive coalition of Arab, anti-war, anti-imperialist and community groups planned to demand: “Free Palestine, end the colonial occupation now, stop the killings in Gaza, no U.S. aid to Israel, the right of return for all Palestinians, and free Palestinian political prisoners!”

Collective punishment

The atrocity at Beit Hanoun did not begin on Nov. 8. Nor did it end there. More than 50 Palestinians had already been killed and hundreds more wounded since the Israeli military had opened its siege, dubbed Operation “Autumn Cloud,” on Nov. 1.

These lives lost were part of an overall 450 Palestinians killed since June in an even wider military offensive against Gaza nicknamed “Summer Rains.” (The Observer, Nov. 12)

Tel Aviv, with the backing of the United States as senior imperialist power, is unleashing economic strangulation and shock-and-awe terror in order to force a “regime change.”

This is collective punishment carried out against the Palestinian people for daring to elect Hamas to lead their government almost 10 months ago.

Palestinians are being killed at a drastically higher rate since

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World condemns Hussein verdict 8



PHOTOS: SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA
Rally and march protesting the verdict and death sentence of Saddam Hussein held in Calcutta, India, Nov. 8.

Workers World Party’s history

LGBT members welcomed from day one

By Leslie Feinberg

During the Cold War, the early Mattachine movement was founded by revolutionaries, many of whom had to leave their communist and radical parties in order to openly organize against gay oppression. Even after Stonewall, some socialist or communist organizations maintained policies banning gay and lesbian membership, which led members to quit, some of whom then helped develop left currents in gay liberation.

Radical and revolutionary groups in the gay liberation movement after Stonewall included Third World Gay Liberation, Gay Liberation Front and its Marxist study group Red Butterfly, the Lavender Left, Committee of Lesbian and Gay Male Socialists, the Lavender & Red Union, and Gay Revolution and Gay Flames.

But in one communist party—Workers World Party—the struggle against gay oppression was taken up in earnest by the entire organization, not just the lesbian, gay, bi and trans (LGBT) members.

Workers World Party had emerged as a distinct party in 1959, after having been a principled, ideological grouping within the Socialist Workers Party for 10 years that differed with the SWP leadership on crucial international and domestic issues.

The founder of WWP, Sam Marcy, had characterized U.S. imperialism’s war against Korea as part of a global class war. In his 1950 analysis of this global class war, written as an internal document, Marcy described that era as characterized by a profound struggle between two class combatants.

On one side was a bloc of workers’ states, headed by the Soviet Union and the newly formed People’s Republic of China, that was attempting to build socialism and at the same time was forming alliances with oppressed nations trying to break the shackles of colonialism and imperialism. On the other side was the imperialist camp, headed by U.S. finance capital, which sought to dismantle the workers’ states and keep oppressed peoples in servitude.

Marcy argued that workers and oppressed peoples around the world had every class reason to defend the anti-imperialist bloc.

Marcy’s principled defense of the socialist camp set him apart as a political leader. At that time, many individuals and groups that called themselves socialist or communist either refused to actively defend the USSR—which was under constant siege, covertly and overtly, from imperialism—or outright politically attacked it.

Sam Marcy built a political tendency that was steeped in Lenin’s understanding that class unity is impossible without resolute defense of all struggles for national liberation from imperialism. And this former labor organizer—whose co-workers referred to him as “Solidarity Sam”—knew in his political bones that the same capitalist class in the U.S. used its police, courts, prisons and troops as a military boot heel to oppress Black, Latin@, Asian, Native and other oppressed peoples who constitute nations within the borders of this country. In other words, the U.S. is definitely not “one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

This deep understanding of the need to battle oppression in order to build the kind of solidarity that can

truly achieve class unity was a defining characteristic of Marcy’s ideological grouping.

For over a decade Marcy and his co-thinkers argued out their political disagreements within the Socialist Workers Party, taking their vigorous defense of the Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese revolutions and the need to support the socialist bloc to the SWP National Committee. But these differences eventually led the Marcy ideological grouping to leave the SWP in 1959 and form Workers World Party (WWP).

One of the first branches of WWP was in the working-class, industrial city of Buffalo, N.Y. From day one, Workers World Party did not, and never had, an internal policy barring membership to lesbians, gay men, bisexuals or trans people. The founding members included individuals who today would put themselves somewhere under the umbrella of LGBT identities.

During the McCarthyite witch hunt, however, same-sex love and cross-dressing were illegal, hunted by state repression and hounded and harassed by the “Lavender Scare” that was a central crusade of the domestic Cold War. So, while founding members and individuals who joined Workers World before the Stonewall era did not necessarily self-identify based on their sexuality, it was not because of any internal membership policy that kept them “in the closet.”

What made Workers World Party open in this period to members who today would be referred to as LGBT? And what prepared the leadership of this communist party to make political breakthroughs about lesbian and gay oppression shortly after Stonewall?

‘An injury to one is an injury to all’

Bob McCubbin, a gay man who met Workers World Party back in autumn 1960—and later worked with other leaders in the organization to write a germinal Marxist analysis of the roots of sexual oppression in class society—recently addressed those questions from his own first-hand experience.

Asked about those days, he wrote back, “The small group of political organizers who came together to form Workers World Party in 1959 carried forward, in addition to the communist spirit of struggle and profound class consciousness, an undiluted and uncompromised political tradition and ideology harking back at least a century, that made the newly dawning struggles for sexual and gender equality in the mid-century U.S. relatively easy for them to identify with and embrace as legitimate and important for the working class.”

McCubbin continued, “Under Sam Marcy’s leadership, the party’s guiding ideas included, from the very beginning, the concept of the great diversity of the world’s working class and the need to address all of the different issues that this diversity manifested from a class-conscious and revolutionary perspective. This was in the interests of uniting the whole class for the inevitable struggles for power.

“But Marcy’s lifelong experience as a working class organizer and theoretician also taught him that many of the most dedicated and class-conscious fighters were from the ranks of the most exploited and oppressed

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If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

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Procedural bar

A loophole for the rich, a noose for the poor

By Muenda

This article was written before Willie Shannon was executed on Nov. 8. A lively and angry protest was held outside the death house in Huntsville, Texas, as Shannon's special friend Regina Schmall and three others witnessed the execution. Shannon's funeral was held Nov. 11 in Columbus, Texas, where Shannon grew up. The church was packed with family, friends and the community. Shannon had been a member of PURE—Panthers United for Revolutionary Education—and as requested, was buried with a black beret, a black jacket and boots. His coffin was covered with a red, green, and black African Liberation flag. In his hand was a beautiful, simple light blue origami flower, made by Shannon's comrade and the author of this article. Muenda, a founder and leader, of PURE Muenda has spent the last 30 years on death row and continues to be a political influence there.

On Nov. 8, Willie Shannon, a Texas death row prisoner, is slated to die. And if no authoritative hand intervenes—judge, governor or God—he will be put down by a law designed specifically to bring finality to death penalty cases.

To keep cases moving through the different layers of appeal, the state legislators designed a time limitation rule, commonly called procedural bar. It requires that all legal motions be filed in a timely fashion. Failure to meet a single deadline bars the defendant from filing anything further. All rights to appeal are instantly waived—thus the name procedural bar. The defendant is then executed by default.

To say this rule was put into effect without genuine sentiments, that it was devised expressly to hang the poor and let loose

the rich, is indeed grave and extreme. It can neither be proven nor disproved. But genuine sentiments or not, the class that's exclusively affected by this rule is well established.

In nearly 30 years of reading case law, never once have I come across a case involving a rich person who had been procedurally barred. Well-paid lawyers hired by the affluent never, for any reason, miss filing deadlines.

So why is it that the poor and the poor alone, represented by court-appointed counselors, are consistently hit with the bar?

The answer to this single truth can only be conjectural. But being that it adversely affects the poor unilaterally and people of color disproportionately, race and class bias must be considered.

The great American pretense is that we're all one people, representing a single national interest, with the fairness of democracy extended to all. But the truth is that democracy is not extended to all, and we do not share and can never share the same national interest.

As long as we live in a nation where one culture dominates all others; where there is racial favoritism; where a small few appropriate a disproportionate amount of the nation's wealth to itself; and where some live inside the mainstream while others live on the margins, we have no common interest.

When this myth is exposed, we see clearly a country of antagonisms. So why the myth? What is this supposed national interest, anyway? And, more important, by whom and against whom is it defended?

A good place to start is with the Republicans and the Democrats. They are the two controlling parties. When it comes to lawyers, judges, prosecutors and politicians, nine out of 10 belong to one or the other

party. They control, believe in, and defend the capitalist system. They will tell you themselves that their values “are American values,” that their interests represent the national interest of the country.

In fact, they are literally offended by things and images perceived to be uncouth or un-American: saggy pants, rap music, gays, lesbians, Muslims, poor whites who are considered trash, Chicanos from the

barrios, Blacks from the ghettos, socialists, radicals, and people who protest against the war.

When it comes to officers of the court, a mistaken notion is that defense lawyers are for you, prosecutors are against you, and judges are neutral. They are all of the same class and support the system, whether they are Republican or Democrat, and the

Continued on page 4

Important legal opinion in Angola 3 case

The following excerpt is from a Nov. 9 letter written by Nick Trenticosta and Scott Fleming, attorneys for Herman Wallace and Albert Woodfox. Wallace, Woodfox and Robert King, who was released from prison in 2002, are known within the movement as the Angola 3. These former Black Panthers were held in solitary confinement for more than 30 years in the notorious Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, Louisiana, after being framed and convicted for the murder of a prison guard in 1972. Go to www.prisonactivist.org/angola/ to read more about the case and how to get involved in the struggle to free Wallace and Woodfox.

Dear friends and supporters of the Angola 3,

With great joy, we have just received an opinion from Commissioner Rachel Morgan of the 19th Judicial District Court in Baton Rouge recommending that Herman Wallace's 1974 murder conviction be reversed. The opinion is the result of an evidentiary hearing held inside the Louisiana State Penitentiary on Sept. 19, and gives us new hope that Herman, who is 65 years old and has now been in soli-



Herman Wallace PHOTO: KATRINA.INDYMEDIA

tary confinement for 34 years, may soon win his freedom. There are, however, still struggles ahead.

The commissioner found that the prosecution violated Herman's due process rights by hiding from the jury and defense lawyers the fact that it had provided prison informant Hezekiah Brown, their key witness, with the promise of a pardon from a life sentence as well as a carton of cigarettes each week and a private room with a television on prison grounds.

Under the law, this constitutional violation requires that Herman's conviction for the 1972 murder of a correctional officer be overturned. This case, like so many others, involves an incompetent and biased

Continued on page 10

International victories for LGBT movement

By LeiLani Dowell

The international movement for lesbian, gay, bi and trans rights recently received two victories. In the federal district of Mexico City, the assembly approved same-sex civil unions for the first time in Mexico's history on Nov. 9. While not a full approval of same-sex marriage, under the ruling couples will be provided benefits similar to those currently received only by married couples, including inheritance and pension rights; under the ruling, heterosexual unmarried couples can also register their union. (AP, Nov. 10)

The only opposition votes to the bill—which passed 43-17—came from the National Action Party of President Vicente Fox and president-elect Felipe Calderón. Mexico City, the capital of Mexico, is a stronghold of the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD) of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who will be sworn in as Mexico's legitimate president in a people's inauguration on Nov. 20. The Advocate reports that the PRD has been promoting the civil union measure for several years. (Nov. 11)

Hawai'i: highest-elected transgender person

In Hawai'i, Kim Coco Iwamoto has become the first openly transgender person elected to a state-level office in the

United States. She was elected to Hawai'i's state level Board of Education on a platform that focused on the issues of children in Hawai'i's public school system.

Iwamoto's campaign website states: “Education is an investment that yields the highest returns for our whole community. Public schools must be fully funded to achieve our community's vision of public education, not just to meet state and federal mandates.” (kimcoco.com)

Iwamoto is an attorney with a history of advocacy in the LGBT communities. In 2004 she co-authored a commentary in the Honolulu Advertiser deriding the Hawai'i legislature for its failure to pass legislation that would protect people from housing discrimination based on sexuality. (June 13, 2004)

She is featured in a handbook on transgender policy for her activism in regards to transgender-sensitive restroom facilities on the campus of the University of New Mexico, from which she holds a law degree. She has also advocated for transgender youth at the Hawai'i state capitol. (AP, Nov. 8)

Iwamoto told the Honolulu Star-Bulletin: “I've never run as anyone else but myself. I am a first-time candidate, so I think it says a lot about the people of Hawai'i who'd like to focus on the issues and move education forward.” □

ON THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF MUMIA ABU-JAMAL's ARREST



24 years on death row is an injustice

Be in Philadelphia Sat., Dec. 9

12:00 2pm Gather at City Hall March to follow Rally at AFSC 1501 Cherry St. at 15th St.

Bring your banners, placards & noisemakers on Dec. 9

Endorsers include: International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, NY Free Mumia Coalition, Harlem Tenants Council, International Action Center, Patrice Lumumba Coalition, IFCO/Pastors for Peace, Iglesia San Romero/UCC, Campaign to End the Death Penalty, FIST - Fight Imperialism, Stand Together youth group and others

For more information on the march and rally, leaflets & posters in Philadelphia: call ICFFMAJ at 215-476-8812. For leaflets/posters and NY bus information: Call NYFMC hotline at 212-330-8029 or go to freemumia.com; call IAC at 212-633-6646 or go to millions4mumia.org

To hear Mumia's audio columns, go to prisonradio.org

Why is it important for the movement to be in Philadelphia on Dec. 9?

■ Mumia's legal appeal, which proves that he did not get a fair trial, is being reviewed before the highest court under the U.S. Supreme Court; oral arguments will be held in the next few months.

■ The City Council of Philadelphia and the State of Pennsylvania Senate & Assembly passed resolutions this past May insisting that France withdraw the naming of a street after Mumia, and that Mumia no longer has any right to appeal, in direct contradiction of his being granted the right to do so before the Third circuit Court of Appeals.

■ Remember the executions of Shaka Sankofa, Stanley Tookie Williams, Hasan Shakur, Frances Newton and others. Let's act now to organize to save Mumia's life before it is too late.

■ Mumia is a national and international leader in the fight against war, racism and all forms of repression and exploitation. A serious threat on Mumia's life is a serious attack on all of our struggles.

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal and all political prisoners!

“We couldn't save Malcolm, but we can save Mumia”

—ASSATA SHAKUR, 1995

Public housing workers rally for ‘Equal pay for equal work’



Nov. 11 demonstration

WWW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

Chants alternated between the general: “No justice, no peace!” and the specific: “No money, no work!” The only thing louder was the cacophony of automobile horns honking in support of the maintenance workers at the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) in Cleveland. Their union, AFSCME Local 1355, held a rally Nov. 11 at the site of the future CMHA headquarters. After rejecting the wage increase recommended by a fact-finder, these underpaid workers have voted to authorize a strike.

Last-minute negotiations may or may not avert a strike, but Local 1355 members have already begun educating the public as to the righteous nature of their cause. Despite the skilled and multifaceted nature of their work—maintaining and repairing thousands of units in the oldest public housing system in the country—CMHA workers make close to one-third less than public housing employees in the rest of Northeast Ohio. CMHA refuses to pay them even the prevailing wage recommended by Housing and Urban Development.

The overwhelming majority of these

workers are African American. At the rally, both Black and white workers carried signs which charged “Racism does exist in government wages.” Other signs demanded “Equal pay for equal work” and “Justice now.”

Joining Local 1355 in this and previous protests has been the militant community organization Black on Black. Representing Black on Black, longtime activist Art McKoy stated to the workers, “You have already won. By coming out here in this cold, damp, rainy weather and showing your fortitude, you are stronger than CMHA management.” McKoy was arrested and held overnight at a previous demonstration outside the home of Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson.

Local 1355 President Dave Patterson added that it was in the interest of the CMHA residents that workers be paid a living wage.

Community support is already visible. On busy Kinsman Avenue in Cleveland’s Black community, the overwhelming majority honked, waved, cheered, and even got dogs to bark in solidarity. Members of the Peoples Fightback Center came with signs demanding “Money for housing, not for war!” □

NEW YORK CITY

So many workers, so few jobs

By Brenda Ryan
New York

Most people looking for a job are made to feel invisible. But early in November thousands of people lined up outside a building on Eighth Avenue in Manhattan to apply for a job at a new candy store. Suddenly, it was like shining a spotlight on the masses of people who are jobless.

The New York Times reported Nov. 4 that the crowd, which was mostly young, Black and Latin@, began showing up at 1 a.m. to apply for fewer than 200 positions at a new Mars Inc.’s M&M store at Times Square. Only 65 of the positions were full-time.

The Times said people were lured by an advertisement that said the company

would be hiring “on-the-spot.” But so many people showed up that the company stopped interviewing people after talking to several dozen and told the others waiting in line to mail in an application or apply for a job online.

“This is what unemployment looks like in New York City,” a woman in the crowd told the Times. “I wanted to cry.”

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics announced this month that the country’s unemployment rate had fallen to 4.4 percent at the beginning of November. That means 6.7 million people are seeking work and don’t have a job. But the figure doesn’t include those with part-time jobs, the homeless, undocumented workers, and people who have given up looking for work. Almost half of all Black men in New York City were unemployed in 2003. (Community Service Society, February 2004)

The underlying optimism of the Labor Department’s announcement ignores the reality that hundreds of thousands of people are being laid off around the country every month.

The New York State Labor Department also touted New York City’s unemployment rate of 4.5 percent. “In September 2006, the New York City rate was below the national rate (4.6 percent) for the first time since August 1988,” the department said in a press release. It rattled off a list of industries that have seen a jump in employment, including scientific research and development (R&D), up more than 9 percent, and utilities, up almost 8 percent. At the same time manufacturing and transportation jobs have dropped more than 2 percent over the one-month period.

While the Labor Department portrays the numbers as good news, the people looking for work at the candy store show the truth behind the statistics. Some of those in line told the Times they were hoping to get a job that offered full-time work or a little more money than they were currently making: Mars’s starting pay is \$10.75 per hour. And in the most expensive city in the country, that won’t pay the rent, let alone raise a family. □

Procedural bar loophole

Continued from page 3

greater number of them is conservative.

Therefore, they are unavoidably politically biased, but not necessarily with malice. They are against crime, as they should be. They are also against all images stereotyped as criminal, and they shouldn’t be.

So when a youngster goes on trial and fits the stereotypical image of a thug, then nobody in that courtroom wants to see him go free. Not even his lawyer.

In the event that it’s a capital murder case, the lawyer works to get a life sentence rather than the death penalty. And sometimes they don’t even do that. They miss filing deadlines or fail to preserve their client’s right, which in effect amounts to killing the client themselves.

Again, this is something that could never happen to a person of clout and station in this country. For this reason, this particular rule of law is a loophole for the rich and a noose for the poor.

So, come November 8, barring a miracle, another poor man from the working class will be hanged in Texas. □

Teachers in solidarity with Oaxacan workers



Despite gusts of rain, 100 or more faculty, staff and students from the City University of New York as well as other progressives came to the Mexican Consulate in New York Nov. 13 to protest the attacks on the teachers and other workers in Oaxaca, Mexico.

The demonstration was called by the Professional Staff Congress/Federation of Teachers Local 2334, the union that represents the faculty and professional staff at CUNY. It was the third action that the PSC has called since June, in its attempt to put the Mexican government on notice that the labor movement in the United States is in solidarity with its sisters and brothers under attack in Mexico.

The PSC has also sent money so the teachers in Oaxaca could rebuild their radio station. Go to workers.org to read more on this important struggle.

—Report and photo by G. Dunkel

SOUTH DAKOTA

Mass campaign leads to defeat of anti-choice bill

By Kris Hamel

The defeat of Referred Law 6 in South Dakota on Nov. 7 marks a profound victory for pro-choice activists, women and women's reproductive rights in the United States. The South Dakota vote overturning the extreme abortion ban in that state is a victory not just for these movements, but for the entire working class struggle as well, one replete with important lessons for the battles yet to come.

By a vote of 185,948 to 148,666, or 56 percent against and 44 percent for, voters in the large, conservative and sparsely populated state sent a resounding message that the previously-passed HB 1215—the law which banned abortions even in cases of rape and incest, and with no provisions for a woman's medical condition—went too far. The vote reflects the many months of hard work and grassroots struggle that pro-choice activists carried out to defend reproductive rights.

This struggle unfolded in a state with a population of only 770,000 residents spread out over 77,000 square miles. About 800 abortions are performed there annually. According to the state health department, 9 percent of abortions are obtained by Native women, which is about the same percentage as the Native American population in South Dakota. In addition to Native women and men, with a population of 63,000, African-American residents along with Latin@s make up just 2 percent of the state's population.

According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research report on the Status of Women in South Dakota, median annual earnings for women in South Dakota rank last in the country. Ten percent of white women in the state live in poverty while 50 percent of Native American women in South Dakota are poor.

'Full frontal attack'

HB 1215 was signed into law on March 6 by Gov. Mike Rounds, after being passed in the state legislature in February. In 2005, five other laws restricting abortions were also enacted in South Dakota.

According to Rounds, HB 1215 was designed as a "full frontal attack" on Roe v. Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that legalized a woman's right to abortion. The law would have made it a felony for anyone to assist a woman in terminating a pregnancy except if the woman's life was in jeopardy. Physicians would have faced steep fines and prison sentences if they performed an abortion.

The anti-choice forces in South Dakota calculated that Planned Parenthood, which operates the only clinic providing abortions in the entire state, would go to court and force the issue all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, where they hoped the new alignment of justices would overturn Roe v. Wade altogether. What they did not expect, however, was that a mass movement of pro-choice activists would mobilize instead to put the law on the ballot to let voters decide. A mass campaign to defeat the law was launched.

Mass mobilization was decisive

A pro-choice coalition called the South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families was formed on March 24, less than three weeks after HB 1215 was signed into law. Over 1,200 volunteers in less than ten weeks turned in twice the necessary petitions—38,000 signatures from every county in the state—to have HB 1215 placed on the ballot as Referred Law 6. This mobilization of pro-choice activists did what many thought could not be done. But they didn't stop there.

SDCHF opened six offices around the state and hundreds of activists and volun-

teers were organized into the struggle to defeat RL6. They campaigned door to door, did telephone banking, mass mailings and distributions of Vote No on 6 literature at county and state fairs. They raised tens of thousands of dollars in donations and led in the polls as early as July. NARAL Pro-Choice America played an instrumental role in providing significant financial and organizational resources as well as mobilizing activists for the struggle.

In a desperate attempt to keep the abortion ban, the law's author, state representative Roger Hunt, created a phony corporation in September called Promising Future, Inc. According to the SDCHF, the dummy corporation "was established specifically for the purpose of accepting donations to fund the campaign in favor of the law—on the ballot as Referred Law 6—and to keep those donations secret." Hunt gave \$750,000 to the Vote Yes for Life campaign and refused to identify the donor, violating election law.

Anti-choice advocates conducted a campaign of outright lies, telling voters that the law did provide for cases of rape and incest and health of the pregnant woman. They instituted a phony "we're the real feminists" campaign that called women who have chosen abortion "victims" and lied that abortion causes mental illness and depression in women, that motherhood is "natural" and other right-wing, anti-woman rhetoric designed to turn back the clock on women's reproductive rights.

Important step forward

Nationally, other restrictions to abortion were also on the ballot on Nov. 7. Both Proposition 85 in California and Ballot Measure 43 in Oregon, which would have required that young women seeking abortions wait 48 hours while their parents were given written notification, were

defeated. On Oct. 30, the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals blocked the enforcement of a 2005 law in South Dakota which would have required physicians to inform women in writing that abortion would "terminate the life of a whole, separate, unique living human being." The court agreed that such "governmentally compelled expression" violates the First Amendment.

While the campaign for choice in South Dakota by necessity focused narrowly on RL6 as "too restrictive," the struggle there nevertheless signals an important step forward for the movement for women's reproductive freedom.

It remains to be seen what the effect of the pro-choice victory in South Dakota will be, both in that state and nationally. South Dakota legislators may try to pass another abortion ban, this time including exceptions for rape, incest and health of the woman. Currently the U.S. Supreme Court has heard arguments and will decide on the federal, misnamed "partial birth abortion" law. Anti-choice forces, which have been dealt a major setback with the overturn of RL6 in South Dakota, will be carefully assessing their defeat there and planning for the next attack in the unrelenting war against women's reproductive freedom.

Fighters for social justice, including reproductive rights and anti-racist, pro-affirmative action activists, must redouble their efforts in the period to come in order to successfully combat the many attacks facing working class women and men, especially those in the oppressed communities. Organizing on the ground, as in South Dakota, will be the key to victory.

The writer is a leader of DANFORR—Detroit Action Network For Reproductive Rights—which has organized support for pro-abortion forces in South Dakota.

Houston janitors take center stage

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

For the past four weeks, 1,700 striking Houston janitors have caught the attention of everyone in this city—from landlords to realtors to other workers to students to religious leaders to Zapatista supporters.

Each week brings more creative and militant demonstrations, occupations, marches, sit-ins, civil disobedience, meetings and protests. Solidarity is growing daily among other unions, Latin@ student organizations and progressives in the city.

Houston has become a testing ground for a movement to stop the spread of an economy based on poverty-level wages. In November 2005, over 5,000 Houston janitors made an historic decision to form a union with the Service Employees International Union. This was one of the biggest successful organizing drives ever in the private sector in the Southern half of the United States.

Today picket lines are up outside buildings in Los Angeles, New York and Chicago, and janitors are expected to honor those picket lines. Internationally, there have been actions by union activists in Mexico City, Moscow, Berlin, London, Panama, and the Netherlands calling on wealthy executive Gerald Hines and Chevron to stop opposing Houston janitors' efforts to move out of poverty.

At least 50 SEIU janitors and union



Protesters expose slave wages Nov. 11.

PHOTO: GISLAINE WILLIAMS

leaders from around the country will travel to Houston in mid-November to call on national commercial landlords to put an end to poverty wages. These "Freedom Flyers" will continue a popular union tactic of non-violent protest against injustice inspired by the Freedom Riders of the 1960s, who rode throughout the Southern United States protesting racist segregation and denial of civil rights for African Americans.

A nationwide Chevron Day of Action is scheduled for Nov. 15. Since the janitors earn \$20 a day, workers and community supporters will hold actions outside Chevron or Texaco gas stations in 20

cities—one city to represent every dollar that Houston janitors who clean Chevron buildings are paid each day for scrubbing floors and cleaning toilets.

Although Chevron made \$14 billion in profits last year, the corporation refuses to use its power to settle the strike and direct

Marxism, Reparations & the Black Freedom Struggle

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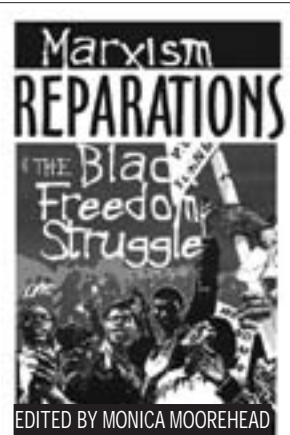
the cleaning firms in its office buildings to provide janitors with fair wages and health insurance.

SEIU has organized 5,300 janitors in Houston in one of the largest union organizing drives in the South. Janitors here earn around \$5 an hour with no benefits. They seek \$8.50 an hour and health benefits.

Recently janitors held a candlelight march through the Rivers Oaks neighborhood, the wealthiest in Houston. A house owned by a key real-estate executive there was appraised at \$4,800,888, according to county records. A janitor earning \$5.15 an hour would have to work 932,211 hours—106 straight years, 24 hours a day, without so much as a lunch break—to pay for that house.

For more information see: www.houstonjanitors.org, www.houston.indymedia.org, and www.chevronwontyoujoinus.org.

□



Time to take to the streets

Dems in, Rumsfeld out, but war crisis remains

By Fred Goldstein

The Democratic Party sweep of both houses of Congress and the ouster of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld have something in common. Both spring from the determination of the Iraqis to resist the U.S.-British occupation. Had it not been for the Pentagon's enormous setbacks in its effort to conquer Iraq, and the sacrifices of the Iraqi people in their struggle to end the occupation, both events might not have happened.

The Democrats' electoral victory was based upon two factors. The first is the massive anti-war sentiment developing among the population. Over 60 percent of the people registered their opposition to the war in numerous polls. With casualties and war costs mounting and the economic situation at home deteriorating, mass discontent was building at the bottom. The Democratic Party strategists played to this sentiment across the board.

This discontent might not have surfaced, however, had it not been for the second factor: the deep disillusionment and profound concern among major sections of the ruling class that U.S. imperialism is facing imminent disaster in Iraq. Without this disaffection within the establishment, which allowed some of the truth about what is going on in Iraq to take center stage during the election campaign, it might have been impossible for the broad anti-war sentiment to develop and be reflected at the polls.

Iraqi resistance and Rumsfeld's ouster

The growing success of the resistance is behind three important developments: a call by a succession of U.S. generals for Rumsfeld's resignation; a shift in campaign donations by sections of big business to the Democratic Party; and the appointment by Congress of the Iraq Study Group to devise a strategy to save the fortunes of U.S. imperialism in Iraq.

Rumsfeld's unceremonious firing by President George W. Bush came the day after the election. While that might have influenced the timing, Rumsfeld's head was scheduled to fall, regardless. The New York Times of Nov. 10 revealed that "President Bush was moving by late summer toward removing ... Rumsfeld as defense secretary. ... Weeks before election day the question still open was when, not whether, to make the move." It was a "summer of heavy violence in Iraq" that sealed Rumsfeld's fate.

The resistance was making steady progress. The ruling class and sections of the military were blaming it on Rumsfeld, who would not allow any shift in strategy or tactics. His strength was his support from Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney. The rigidity of the Rumsfeld faction made flexibility in dealing with the crisis impossible. Thus the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld group- ing had to be broken up.

The key player in charge of military operations was fired.

Rumsfeld a war criminal

Of course, Rumsfeld was a political liability all over the world for Washington. In fact, there is a motion in Germany to put him on trial as a war criminal for his policy of torture in Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo.

The Center for Constitutional Rights

has joined German groups in filing a complaint and an application for a criminal investigation to be launched with the Federal Prosecutor's Office in Karlsruhe. In addition to the CCR, the International Federation of Human Rights and others are part of the suit.

Lawyers are basing their case model on that of the prosecution of Chilean fascist dictator Augusto Pinochet, who was arrested several times on violations of human rights charges but has not been jailed. The complaint is on behalf of 11 Iraqi citizens who were held at Abu Ghraib and one Saudi detainee who was held at Guantánamo. The plaintiffs were victims of beatings, sleep and food deprivation, hooding and sexual abuse.

Military say send more troops

One of the keys to the firing of Rumsfeld may have been revealed in statements from "anti-Rumsfeld" retired generals and experts who publicly called for his resignation. Gen. Anthony Zinni, former head of the U.S. Central Command, was opposed to the war but argues against "any substantial reduction of American forces over the next several months."

"Instead of taking troops out, General Zinni said, it would make more sense to consider deploying additional American forces over the next six months to 'regain momentum' as part of a broader effort to stabilize Iraq." (New York Times, Nov. 15)

John Batiste, a retired Army major general who commanded a division in Iraq, also called publicly for Rumsfeld's ouster. Yet Batiste branded the call for troop withdrawals "terribly naïve."

"There are lots of things that have to happen" before troops are withdrawn, he said. According to the Times, Batiste "has recently written that pending the train-

ing of an effective Iraq force, it may be necessary to deploy tens of thousands of additional 'coalition troops.' Some military experts said that while the American military is stretched thin, the number of American troops in Iraq could be increased temporarily—by perhaps 10,000 or more, in addition to the 150,000 or so already there—by prolonging combat tours."

Thus, at least one important part of the argument that led to the firing of Rumsfeld, as far as sections of the military are concerned, is that his strategy refused to contemplate adding more troops, even on an emergency basis.

Iraq Study Group: more than a family affair

There has been much speculation about the Iraq Study Group (ISG), a 10-member bipartisan commission headed by James Baker III, who was secretary of state under former President George H.W. Bush. Baker is a loyalist to the Bush dynasty who engineered the current president's theft of the 2000 election in Florida.

Bush the younger reluctantly agreed to the ISG when it was formed in March. As the military situation deteriorated, he allegedly grew more receptive. But Baker would not agree to bring a report to him until Rumsfeld was fired.

Rumsfeld's replacement, like Baker, served under the elder Bush. Robert Gates was CIA director at that time and a hardened Cold Warrior who, during the Reagan administration, had doctored intelligence to exaggerate Soviet weapons stocks in order to get maximum funding for Reagan's \$2 trillion military spending.

The conventional wisdom is that the Baker commission, co-headed by Lee Hamilton, former Democratic senator from Indiana, is basically a Bush family

affair by which the elder Bush is attempting to bail out his son and keep the family name from being completely dragged into the mud.

There is some truth to this. But this is more than a family affair. The elder Bush is part of a ruling class political/economic dynasty that goes back at least three generations, to Orville Prescott Bush, a senator from Connecticut and a ruling class investment banker associated with railroad magnate-turned-banker Averill Harriman. The Bush family is based in investment banking in the East and banking and oil in Texas. During the Reagan administration, the elder Bush was vice president and represented the centrist wing of the Republican ruling class establishment, while Reagan represented the right wing.

The foreign policy establishment of the Republican Party and the mainstream bourgeoisie has crystallized around this Bush dynasty in order to intervene in the present Bush administration and try to salvage its fortunes in Iraq and the Middle East in general.

But as much as this study group studies, it cannot solve Washington's fundamental dilemma. The U.S. cannot stay in Iraq, but pulling out altogether and leaving the country to the Iraqis is to humble the U.S. imperialist "superpower" and admit defeat. Already there are advance leaks that the ISG has few good options and that the masses should not expect anything new, any "magic bullet."

To be sure, the sentiment for retreat may be strong at this point. In fact, the ISG only visited Iraq once. "The commission returned from a brief trip to Baghdad in September collectively stunned by the chaos—which is interesting, since they barely got to see it," said a Time Magazine article of Nov. 12. "They apparently saw enough: the donning of the body armor, the corkscrew approach in the Air Force cargo plane, the harrowing treetop chopper flight into the Green Zone—it all left the commissioners shaken. ... There are no plans to go back." But even if they want to devise a general retreat with minimal losses for the ruling class, it seems highly doubtful that this can be achieved.

Dems were Bush's war enablers

The Democratic Party leaders, the so-called anti-war opposition, are clinging to the ISG report for their solution, since they have no answer to save the imperialists in Iraq. This is the thrust of their posture against the war.

Given all the demagoguery and posturing going on in preparation for the presidential campaign in 2008, it is important to remember that these leaders were the enablers of the Bush administration's war when they thought it could be won. With the exception of the Congressional Black Caucus, the Democrats gave Bush and the Republicans overwhelming majorities in the House and the Senate to approve the war resolution of Oct. 10, 2002. In the House, over one-third of the Democrats—81 members—voted with 215 Republicans for the war. In the Senate, 29 Democrats joined 49 Republicans.

Despite the polls at the time showing that sentiment in the country among Democrats was over 90 percent against the war resolution, the leaders jumped on board with Bush and defied the rank-

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GI resistance grows, active & AWOL

By John Catalinotto

If the reaction of some active-duty and veteran GIs is any indication, the movement inside the U.S. military of resistance to the occupation of Iraq is not sitting back and waiting for Congress to stop the war. They are continuing to organize and struggle.

Workers World spoke with Navy Seaman Jonathan Hutto, based in Norfolk, Va., who is a key organizer of the "Appeal for Redress." This is a petition meant for active-duty GIs that expresses their dissent over the continued occupation of Iraq.

For Hutto, born and raised in Atlanta and reared on stories of the civil rights movement, Nov. 13 was a big day. "They began work today on the Martin Luther King Jr. memorial," he said. "I am moved by this, by King taking a place where there are memorials to Washington, Lincoln and Jefferson. Theirs were dedicated to presidents. King's is dedicated to justice and peace.

"That's the vein in which we want to present this appeal," the 29-year-old Howard University graduate continued. "Not as military members breaking a law, but upholding our duty to participate in democracy. We will affirm that duty and that right."

Legal right to appeal

Hutto asserted: "To those who say military members cannot speak, I say that only under a fascist dictatorship could people be stopped from raising their voices. As children growing up we studied the history of the Freedom Rides. The Supreme Court said segregation was illegal. The Freedom Riders said, 'We're going to ride these buses integrated.' We in the armed forces also have the legal right to appeal to Congress without being punished."

The appeal, which can be found and

signed by GIs at www.appeal-forredress.org, reads: "As a patriotic American proud to serve the nation in uniform, I respectfully urge my political leaders in Congress to support the prompt withdrawal of all American military forces and bases from Iraq. Staying in Iraq will not work and is not worth the price. It is time for U.S. troops to come home."

Hutto says that GIs in the United States but also those stationed in Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Germany, Italy and Japan have signed the petition. The organizers are going through the names carefully and have confirmed 700 active-duty GIs. They hope to collect at least 2,000 before presenting them to Congress.

Asked about the impact of the recent elections, Hutto said: "In terms of the cause of the 'thumping,' Iraq was the number one issue on people's minds. The vote was a result of people's feelings about the occupation. They want change. They see that the war is draining tax dollars and people out of their communities. Many of their youths are killed, even more severely mangled and disfigured. The advance of technology and body armor saves lives, but the troops come back with injuries that will wreck their lives.

"I see myself as a human rights defender," Hutto said. "We have to point out the overwhelming destruction of the Iraqi people. A Johns Hopkins report said 650,000 were killed. It's no wonder life is dangerous there for U.S. troops. Sixty-one percent of Iraqi people said they support the killing of U.S. soldiers. That's because the service member is an occupier. The Iraqis don't see the occupation as some-



Jonathan Hutto, Nov. 5.

thing that brought health care or jobs to their community."

Return from Canada

Some of the GIs who went AWOL and lived in Canada for a year or more have now decided to return to the United States, even if it means facing punishment. One of them, Iraq war veteran and war resister Darrell Anderson, turned himself in at Fort Knox, Ky., on Oct. 3, ready to struggle if the Army put him on trial. But Anderson was released three days later and expects an "other than honorable" discharge without facing court martial.

Vietnam-era veteran Gerry Condon, who helps organize support for those GIs who are taking refuge in Canada, told WW that Anderson, who is from Lexington, Ky., expects to play a role in the movement of Iraq war veterans who speak out against the occupation. Condon was in Chicago with AWOL GI Kyle Snyder attending

anti-war events. Snyder had gone on leave directly from Iraq after he witnessed U.S. soldiers shoot an innocent man in Mosul, in Iraq's north.

Snyder stayed in western Canada for over a year, then, like Anderson, decided to return to the United States. The Army at first told him they would quickly discharge him, as they did with Anderson, but they reneged after they found out Snyder's unit was again scheduled to be sent to Iraq, for the third time. Now Snyder is speaking out against the occupation.

On the "Democracy Now!" radio program earlier this month, Snyder had this message for GIs in Iraq: "If you feel that you're doing the wrong thing, please speak out. [T]he GI resistance is very important in changing the politics of this country right now. And I feel that as GIs start coming out, that's what's going to stop this war, and that's the only thing that's going to stop this war."

Lt. Ehren Watada

There is news on another resister, Lt. Ehren Watada, who began speaking out against the war last spring and turned himself in at Fort Lewis, Wash., after refusing to go to Iraq. Political charges of "contempt towards the president" were dropped Nov. 11, but Watada is to be court-martialed for "missing movement" (article 87 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice) and multiple counts of "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman." The trial is expected in early 2007.

Commenting on the elections, Watada said: "I think as the recent elections show more and more Americans are opening their eyes, but we aren't there yet. I hope that actions such as mine will continue to help expose the truth behind the fundamental illegality and immorality of the war." (couragetoresist.org)

E-mail: jcat@workers.org

Protests mount against 'School of Assassins'

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

While momentum builds to close the infamous training school for Latin American soldiers known as the School of the Americas (SOA), renamed Western Hemisphere Institute for Security and Cooperation (WHINSEC) in 2001, the Bush administration has quietly moved to expand the number of countries eligible to participate in the program.

In 2002, Congress passed legislation banning military training to countries which did not exempt U.S. soldiers from the possibility of facing war crimes trials. Now, however, after a string of left-wing and progressive candidates have gained national office throughout Latin America, the U.S. has sidestepped a law which Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice described as "shooting ourselves in the foot."

For decades, the training of these military forces has provided U.S. political and economic interests with loyal allies and surrogates in the struggle to suppress popular resistance to unchecked exploitation and rampant poverty in Latin America.

With an eye to trying to regain influence among the military and prevent the success of mass resistance, the Bush administration on Oct. 2 waived the ban on 21 countries, 11 of which are in Latin American or the Caribbean.

Some 60,000 combat soldiers and officers have been trained by the Pentagon

since the establishment of this program in 1946. Relocated in 1984 from Panama to Ft. Benning in Columbus, Ga., the SOA is more commonly known as the "School of the Assassins." Its graduates rank consistently among the most notorious mass murderers, torturers, coup plotters and dictators in the bloody pages of social unrest in dozens of countries from Colombia to Haiti, El Salvador to Chile.

Trade unionists, human rights advocates, peasant leaders, teachers, poets, students, religious figures and tens of thousands of other civilians, many from Indigenous communities, have suffered death, rape, torture and exile at the hands of SOA-trained soldiers.

On Nov. 16, 1989, six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her teen-age daughter were dragged from their beds in the middle of the night and brutally killed by a group of Salvadoran soldiers trained at the SOA. Other previous atrocities committed by SOA graduates in that decade included the murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero while he was saying mass at the Cathedral in San Salvador, numerous large-scale massacres in rural villages, and the rape and murder of four U.S. nuns.

The following year, 1990, Father Roy Bourgeois, a Maryknoll priest and Vietnam War combat veteran who had witnessed the grinding poverty and repression as a Catholic missionary in Bolivia and El Salvador, led a small group of protesters to the gates of Ft. Benning, demanding that the SOA be closed and that the U.S. end its

policy of setting up puppet governments in Latin America.

By 2005, the numbers at what is now an annual multi-day event of education, civil disobedience, protest, celebration and solemn remembrance of the victims of the SOA had grown to more than 19,000 people from all across the country, with large participation by youth from high schools and colleges.

Over the years, dozens of people have "crossed the line," bringing their message of justice and peace onto the actual base property, and then been sentenced to months in federal prisons for "trespass."

At the protest in 2000, literally thousands of people defied orders to turn around and went onto the base, confounding military and local police who had no capacity to arrest or detain all of them.

Following 9/11 in 2001, the gates at Ft. Benning were barricaded with high fences topped with concertina wire. Helicopters hovered overhead, and hundreds of police forces surrounded the crowd, but the demand to close the SOA was undaunted.

Instead, the war on Iraq and Afghanistan, the revelations of torture at Guantánamo Bay and Abu Ghraib, the brutal U.S.-backed Israeli occupation of Palestine and southern Lebanon and other issues have bolstered the numbers and determination of the protest at Ft. Benning with organizers expecting over 20,000 this year.

In 2004, Hugo Chávez of Venezuela announced that his country would no longer send its soldiers to be trained in U.S.-

style "human rights and democracy." This year, the governments of Argentina and Uruguay made similar announcements.

The country which currently has the largest number of its military people learning counter-insurgency tactics and crowd control and being trained in sniper techniques and high-tech warfare, is Colombia, where a 40-year civil war pits the oligarchy, backed by huge multi-nationals and the U.S. government, against the workers, the poor and the Indigenous.

Once again, graduates of the SOA have been identified as the perpetrators of recent massacres, torture and the "disappearance" of thousands of men, women and children.

This year for the first time, simultaneous demonstrations and vigils will take place Nov. 17-19 in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Manta, Ecuador; Santiago, Chile; Bogotá, Colombia; Fort Huachuca, Arizona; and Davis, California among other locations.

For more information about SOA Watch and its ongoing efforts to close the School of the Americas, go to www.soaw.org. □

Free
Leonard
Peltier
NOW!



Trial of Saddam Hussein condemned worldwide

By Robert Dobrow

Legal experts, human rights groups and international observers denounced the trial and guilty verdict of Saddam Hussein last week as the worst form of “victor’s justice.”

The U.N. special rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Leandro Despouy, criticized the trial as neither impartial nor fair and urged the Iraqi authorities not to carry out the death sentences, stating that “their application would represent a serious legal setback for the country.”

The Iraqi High Tribunal, said Despouy, “has been established during an occupation considered by many as illegal, is composed of judges who have been selected during this occupation, including non-Iraqi citizens, and has been mainly financed by the United States.”

The U.N. official’s comments were echoed by the U.N. special rapporteur on torture, Manfred Nowak, who told the AP news service that Hussein should not have been sentenced to death.

Amnesty International “deplored” the death sentence verdict after a trial they said was “deeply flawed and unfair.” Human Rights Watch said that it documented numerous serious procedural and substantive flaws in the trial which “undermine the soundness of the verdict.”

Lawyers in Jordan held a one-hour strike to protest the death sentences. The work stoppage was led by the Jordan Bar Association, representing 10,000 members. “We denounce the verdict,” said Saleh al-Armouti, the bar association’s president, “because it’s been issued by the American occupation. The verdict is a

Donald Rumsfeld shakes hands with Saddam Hussein in Baghdad, Dec. 20, 1983.



shameful stain on Iraq’s legal history, and it strikes at the dignity of the Arab and Muslim nation.”

This sentiment was echoed in editorials throughout most of the Arab world.

Illegal invasion makes trial illegal

Curtis Doebbler, a U.S. member of Saddam Hussein’s legal defense team and professor of law at An-Najah National University on the Palestinian West Bank, writing in the Web-based legal news site The Jurist, calls the trial a “farce of law.” Since the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq is “widely understood to be illegal,” says Doebbler, and since one of the aims of this illegal act was to capture, try and execute the president of Iraq, and since the Iraqi special tribunal was created to fulfill this goal, he concludes: “Under international law, when illegal acts have such consequences, all states are obliged not to recognize them. This rule, which is adopted in Article 41(2) of the famed International Law Commission’s Draft Article on State Responsibility, prevents states from benefiting from their own illegal act.”

From day one, the trial and eventual guilty verdict were U.S. productions.

The U.S. Embassy in Iraq, according to a Human Rights Watch report issued on Oct. 16, 2005, “played the lead role in many aspects of the Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal (SICT), including: the building of the courtroom, the conduct of exhumations, review of seized documents ... and training of staff.”

“Americans drafted many of the statutes under which Hussein and his associates are being tried,” reported the Washington Post on Jan. 25. “The U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Regime Crimes Liaison Office run much of the day-to-day arrangements of the trial. Plainclothes security workers, many of them Americans, and Iraqi soldiers guard the turreted, fortress-like former Baath Party headquarters in the American-held Green Zone where the trial is playing out.”

On May 21, the New York Times found that “American influence” on the SICT has been “undeniably pervasive, with about 90 percent of the \$145 million in annual costs and associated investigations paid for by the U.S. Justice Department, and lawyers sent by Washington acting as advisers.”

During the trial, says Doebbler, “The defense was given no time and no facili-

ties to prepare a defense. All exculpating evidence was withheld from the defense. Defense witnesses were threatened by court officials. Defense lawyers were assaulted by U.S. officials. And the defendants were not given the charges against them until eight months after the prosecution had starting presenting evidence, and the day

the defense was required to start its case. The list of violations is long and undoubtedly the reason why every independent expert has found the trial unfair.”

Since the trial began, one judge, five candidate judges, three defense lawyers, and an employee of the tribunal have been killed. The attacks have not been investigated and those responsible have been neither arrested nor punished.

What is Saddam Hussein’s real crime?

Saddam Hussein was found guilty of “crimes against humanity” and sentenced to death by hanging in the 1982 killing of 148 people in the town of Dujail, seized after a failed assassination attempt against him. At the time, however, U.S. President Reagan had few bad words to say about Saddam Hussein. There was no talk of “regime change” and little of the vitriol and venom that marked the Bush-Clinton-Bush years. On the contrary, in 1982 the U.S. actually removed Iraq from its list of state sponsors of terrorism.

It was none other than Donald Rumsfeld, then Reagan’s Middle East special envoy,

Continued on next page

Despite U.S.-backed Israeli massacre Palestinians resist

Continued from page 1

the national elections on March 29, despite the low number of Israelis killed during the same time period.

During the second Intifada—Palestinian uprising—from Sept. 29, 2000, almost four Palestinians were killed in relation to every one Israeli. But since the elections, Palestinians have been killed at a ratio of 26 to every one Israeli.

Since July, that ratio has shot up dramatically, to 76 Palestinians for every Israeli.

Since the Hamas election victory, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank have suffered in the grip of an international economic sabotage and blockade, not unlike imperialist attempts to economically choke Cuba and Iraq. U.S. finance capital has engineered an international cut-off of hundreds of millions of dollars in economic aid and other revenues to the Palestinian Authority.

Israel continues to withhold some \$60 million a month it owes the Palestinian Authority from tax collections.

Gaza is surrounded by Israel on three sides. Tel Aviv determines when the fourth border, with Egypt, is open or shut. “Gaza is a big prison,” says Professor Ali Jarbawi of Bir Zeit University, “and Palestinians are squeezed inside.”

Faced with rising fury among their own populations at the massacres in Gaza, and the U.S. veto of the Arab resolution in the UN Security Council, the Arab League met in Cairo, Egypt, on Nov. 12.

Arab diplomats from 11 countries voted there to defy the United States by rescinding the financial blockade. For the first

time since the Hamas election to government, Hamas Foreign Minister Mahmoud Zahar was invited to attend the meeting.

Up until now, as the AP noted in a Nov. 13 report, “Arab banks have not transferred funds to the Hamas-run Palestinian Authority for fear of U.S.-led sanction. The United States and European Union list Hamas as a terrorist organization and take steps against those who transfer funds to such groups. It was not immediately clear whether Arab banks would immediately begin transactions in response to Sunday’s decision and whether sanctions would be imposed if they did.”

Kuwait’s foreign minister pledged that his country would immediately send \$30 million to the Palestinians. Bahrain’s foreign minister said Arab countries would begin contacting international financial institutions to ready transfer of monies.

Mohammed Awad, secretary general of the Palestinian Cabinet, said that \$52 million should become quickly available for transfer based on the Arab League vote and demand that banks follow their government directives. (AP, Nov. 12)

Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa said the vote to break the economic blockade against the Palestinians was a message to the United States. “Our message is loud [and] clear to those who take unfriendly positions against Arabs.”

‘Long live Palestine!’

The imperialist media has locked down coverage of the Gaza military offensive as tightly as the Israelis have shut down the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Virtually all the coverage makes it seem as though Israel is on a defensive mission. A Nov. 9 Associated Press article summed up this political line: “Israel again expressed regret for the deaths, but blamed the tragedy on Palestinian violence that has forced Israel to defend itself.”

In historical reality, Israel is the occupier. Palestinians are occupied, in their own land.

Palestinian resistance began six decades ago when Zionist colonizers, backed by the world’s imperialist behemoths, occupied historic Palestine by force of arms, sheer terror and bottomless financial support.

For almost 60 years since, the resistance of the Palestinian people—in historic Palestine and throughout the forced diaspora around the world—has proved indomitable.

Jameela al-Shanti, an elected member of the Palestinian Legislative Council for Hamas, was a leader of the Nov. 3 march of some 1,500 Palestinian women who took the lead against Israel’s bloody assault in Beit Hanoun.

In a Nov. 9 article in the British Guardian she decried the dawn air force raid on her home that killed her sister-in-law—who was the sole caretaker of eight children. She described the artillery shelling of the residential district, adding: “This is Israel’s 10th incursion into Beit Hanoun since it announced its withdrawal from Gaza.

“We still do not know what has become of our sons, husbands and brothers since all males over 15 years old were taken away last Thursday. They were ordered to strip to their underwear, handcuffed and led away. It is not easy as a mother, sis-

ter or wife to watch those you love disappear before your eyes. Perhaps that was what helped me, and 1,500 other women, to overcome our fear and defy the Israeli curfew last Friday—and set about freeing some of our young men who were besieged in a mosque while defending us and our city against the Israeli military machine.”

She continued: “We faced the most powerful army in our region unarmed. The soldiers were loaded up with the latest weaponry, and we had nothing, except each other and our yearning for freedom. As we broke through the first barrier, we grew more confident, more determined to break the suffocating siege.”

She watched two close friends—Ibtissam Yusuf abu Nada and Rajaa Ouda—killed in cold blood by troops, and other women badly wounded.

Jameela al-Shanti concluded: “We are being starved and suffocated as a punishment for daring to exercise our democratic right to choose who rules and represents us. Why should we Palestinians have to accept the theft of our land, the ethnic cleansing of our people, incarcerated in forsaken refugee camps, and the denial of our most basic human rights, without protesting and resisting?”

“The lesson the world should learn from Beit Hanoun last week is that Palestinians will never relinquish our land, towns and villages. ... The women of Palestine will resist this monstrous occupation imposed on us at gunpoint, siege and starvation. Our rights and those of future generations are not open for negotiation.”

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who visited Baghdad the next year, shook hands with Hussein, and promised full diplomatic relations with the U.S.

This was at the height of the Iraq-Iran war, a nine-year fratricidal slaughter that left millions dead, while feeding the profits of Western military contractors who armed both sides to the teeth. The U.S. played a cynical role during the conflict, covertly supporting Iraq, but looking on with glee at the destruction on both sides.

Rumsfeld returned to Baghdad on March 24, 1984, the same day the U.N. released a report that Iraq had used mustard gas and tabun nerve agent against Iranian troops. Five days later, the New York Times reported that “American diplomats pronounce themselves satisfied with Iraq and the U.S., and suggest that normal diplomatic ties have been established in all but name.”

The National Security Archive, an independent, non-governmental research institute, has collected and published scores of declassified documents on the Web obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, on how the U.S. supplied intelligence, logistical support, and weapons, including chemical and biological weapons, to Iraq during the 1980s.

In 1994 testimony before the Senate Banking Committee, headed by then-Sen. Donald Riegle, Jr. (D-Mich.), it was disclosed that between 1985 and 1989, Iraq received at least 72 U.S. shipments of germs and chemicals ranging from substances that could destroy wheat crops to nerve gas. The testimony occurred during hearings about the poor health of Gulf War veterans. Another Senate committee report, also in 1994, detailed 70 shipments of dangerous biological strains, including anthrax bacillus, which later were found to be “identical to those the U.N. inspectors found and recovered from the Iraqi biological warfare program.”

The U.S.’s cozy relationship with the Iraqi government lasted for most of the decade. But following the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, a former province of Iraq, Washington and Big Oil led the campaign to demonize Saddam Hussein and imposed murderous sanctions and two U.S. wars of aggression on the Iraqis. We refer the reader to the many articles in Workers World at the time, particularly by WWP Chairperson Sam Marcy, who analyzed the class forces underlying the U.S. push to war. They are invaluable reading for today. □

World condemns blockade

Now open U.S. covert plan

By Cheryl LaBash

Faced with the 15th consecutive repudiation of its 45-year blockade of Cuba at the United Nations, the United States pulled out another dirty trick on Nov. 8— and was defeated on that as well. The double international victory for Cuba highlights the grave importance of demanding that Washington reveal the contents of the “separate classified annex” included in the 2006 “Report to the President from the Commission for Assistance to A Free Cuba.”

A U.S.-inspired UN amendment introduced by Australia attempted to manipulate the issue of human rights, and forestall the growing global condemnation of Washington’s concerted effort to strangle the Cuban economy through the unprecedented blockade. Two-thirds of the General Assembly voted to “not consider” the spurious amendment.

On the vote that called on the United States to end the blockade, the Associated Press reported, “Delegates in the General

Assembly chamber burst into applause when the vote flashed on the screen—183 in favor to four opposed, with one abstention. Joining the United States in voting ‘no’ were Israel and the South Pacific nations of the Marshall Islands and Palau. Micronesia, also in the South Pacific, abstained.”

At the National Network on Cuba meeting in New York City the weekend before the vote, a representative of ICAP—Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples—explained, “One of the reasons the vote will come out for Cuba on Wednesday is that the United States sends its military, but Cuba sends doctors around the world.”

U.S. imperialism’s global aims are thwarted in many quarters. The determined Iraqi resistance to U.S. occupation reached into the U.S. midterm election results. Throughout Latin America a renewed struggle for self-determination is raging from the ballot boxes to the barricades in Oaxaca.

Unable to tarnish Cuba’s solidarity and internationalism and its willingness

to share what it has with other countries, will U.S. imperialism turn its guns out-right on Cuba? What “reasons of national security and effective implementation” make some recommendations of the 2006 report secret? Is it more assassination attempts? More terror campaigns? An overt bombing of infrastructure as in Iraq, Lebanon, Yugoslavia? With an \$80 million budget increase for this aggression against Cuba, it is the right of U.S. taxpayers to know this information, and their responsibility to demand it.

With the post of U.S. ambassador to the United Nations up for confirmation in January, the Bush administration is determined to keep John Bolton in the post. Bolton proved his usefulness in spreading lies to cover for U.S. aggression. His promotion of lies about Iraq seeking yellowcake uranium from Niger contributed to the U.S. murderous bombing, invasion and occupation of Iraq. In 2002 Bolton was pulled back from falsely accusing Cuba of transferring biological weapons. □

CUBAN SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINE

Statement by the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba observes with extreme concern and profound indignation the atrocities committed since June 28 by the government of Israel in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, in particular the November 7 massacre in the town of Beit Hanoun in the north of that occupied Palestinian territory. In the attack, 18 civilians were brutally murdered, among them eight children.

As a result of the cruel offensive of the Israeli army against the defenseless Palestinian population in recent weeks, more than 200 civilians have been killed, among them 60 children, and almost 1,000 have been wounded. This demonstrates the criminal nature of the aggressor, which enjoys the political, economic and military support of the United States.

Cuba joins the voices around the world calling on the

U.N. Security Council to condemn this criminal act and demands Israel put an end to such actions, which violate all the norms of International Law and Humanitarian International Law. Cuba also calls for an end to the permanent veto by the United States at the U.N. Security Council that grants Israel impunity.

The only path to a fair and lasting peace in the region is by respecting the undeniable right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent and sovereign state of its own, with its capital in East Jerusalem; allowing the return of the refugees; and unconditionally handing back all Arab territories that were occupied in June 1967.

At this crucial hour, Cuba reaffirms its full solidarity with the heroic Palestinian people, victims of the continuous and immoral aggression of the Tel Aviv régime, whose acts deeply hurt humanity’s conscience.

—GRANMA, Nov. 11

Dems in, Rumsfeld out, but war crisis remains

Continued from page 6

and-file masses of their own party to do the bidding of the ruling class, which was overwhelmingly for the war.

Democratic Party leaders at that time, including House Democratic leader Dick Gephardt (Mo.) and Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle (S.D.), as well as Hillary Clinton (N.Y.), rushed to the Rose Garden to be photographed with Bush after the vote. Other leaders who supported the war include major party big wigs such as present Senate majority leader Harry Reid (Nev.), Joseph Biden (Del.), vice presidential candidate John Edwards (N.C.), Dick Schumer (N.Y.), presidential candidate John Kerry (Mass.), Birch Bayh (Ind.), Dianne Feinstein (Calif.) and Jay Rockefeller (W.Va.), among others.

But as the 2006 elections approached, it was clear that the occupation was on the ropes. U.S. casualties neared the 3,000 mark for those killed and over 25,000 wounded. The official cost of the war neared half a trillion dollars. Grassroots discontent was seething below the surface.

Thus, during the elections and up to the present the Democrats have tried to appear “anti-war” as far as Iraq goes by

being not-Bush and repeating ad nauseam the obvious: that “things are not working.”

Up until the summer months the U.S. command was able to hold the resistance to a stalemate. But during the summer the situation begin to tip toward total loss of control of key areas by the Pentagon and the al-Malaki government. A failed attempt was made to crush the resistance in Ramadi, the capital of Anbar province. Then troops were rushed from Anbar to Baghdad to stabilize the capital of 6 million. The Baghdad campaign also completely failed.

By September the capitalist media began lifting the lid on the impending disaster with nightly reports of U.S. casualties and the loss of control by U.S. forces, stirring up anti-war sentiment. The cable channels and the networks promoted the idea that the elections were a referendum on Iraq—precisely because the corporate rulers who control the news wanted to weaken the Bush administration.

While the hatred for the war among the masses was and is completely genuine, based upon the suffering caused by the war, the anti-war demagoguery of the

Democratic Party leadership is not. It is driven by the overriding desire to get hold of the capitalist state, its \$3 trillion budget and all the trappings of power that come with the presidency. Their eyes are strictly on 2008.

Their problem is that, while their masters are the imperialist ruling class, their electoral base is the workers, the oppressed and the progressive middle class. Their opportunist task is to serve their masters in order to get their support in 2008, but also deliver their base—which needs jobs, health care, social services, housing, a raise in wages, and all the things the masses are being deprived of.

Thus, the Democrats must try to placate the people with concessions, but just enough to keep from antagonizing the ruling class. The way they waged their electoral campaign is a model.

They said nothing about the outrageous racist attack on Harold Ford, the candidate to be the first Black senator from the South since Reconstruction. They played down the racism of Republican candidate George Allen in Virginia. They did not fight openly as a party for same-sex marriage. They did not campaign against the

vilification of undocumented workers. They rejected universal health care as a campaign slogan. They failed to speak out against the layoffs and shut down of plants in the auto industry and elsewhere. And they refused to demand the immediate withdrawal of troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.

While they are different from the Republicans in that they have a base in the progressive masses and must reflect that in their policies and agitation, they are as much a party of imperialism as the Republicans and the Bush administration.

In a crunch, they will do the bidding of the ruling class, even if it means dragging out the occupation in Iraq and sending more troops there. Harry Reid, the Senate majority leader, has already said he will not cut off funds for the occupation.

The only way to get the troops home and put an end to the bloodshed is to mobilize mass resistance to the war in every area of life.

The best way to take advantage of the anti-war sentiment that surfaced in the election is to turn it from the ballot box into the streets. □



Exposing a hypocrisy

Student trustees at Orange Coast College have banned the pledge of allegiance at their board meetings, in a three to two vote. The school is located in conservative Orange County, Calif. The United States is the only Western country where the majority of school-children still take a pledge of allegiance daily. (wikipedia.org)

Historically, most legal opposition to the pledge has been prompted by the pledge’s religious connotations. Even before the phrase “under God” was added in 1954—to add to the propaganda of the Cold War anti-communist witch hunts—Jehovah’s Witnesses challenged the pledge, saying their religion precluded them from swearing loyalty to any power lesser than God. Later legal cases focused almost exclusively on the “under God” phrase, saying it excluded some religions as well as atheists, and was unconstitutional based on the separation of church and state.

Student trustee Jason Ball, who proposed the ban, explained: “That (‘under God’) part is sort of offensive to me. I am an atheist and a socialist, and if you know your history, you know that ‘under God’ was inserted during the McCarthy era and was directly designed to destroy my ideology.” (Reuters, Nov. 10)

But the entire pledge is a fraud. From the moment children in the United States enter grammar school, they are indoctrinated daily with a commitment to a country that has brought continued misery and suffering to most of them—descendants of immigrants, enslaved African Americans, Indigenous people and the poor. Often children are forced to recite a pledge that they don’t understand and

isn’t explained to them anyway. That a country that continually attempts to pit worker against worker on the basis of nationality, sexuality, and gender would call itself “indivisible” is utter hypocrisy. Indeed, the greatest fear of the U.S. ruling class is that the multinational working class will unite—and its fears are not unfounded.

The U.S. concept of “liberty and justice for all” is a joke that is exposed more and more each day by police brutality and the prison-industrial complex, institutional and environmental racism, anti-immigrant attacks, offensives against rights for women and lesbian, gay, bi and trans people, and by growing poverty while bosses’ pockets get fuller.

Then, of course, there’s the exportation of U.S.-style “liberty and justice,” through the wars and occupations against Iraq and Afghanistan; U.S.-imposed “free trade” policies that starve the people of Latin America, Asia, Africa and others; and military and political aid to repressive governments around the world, from Israel to Colombia.

Therefore, it’s no wonder that Reuters reports that “the ban largely came about because the trustees didn’t want to publicly vow loyalty to the American government.” Ball said, “Loyalty ought to be something the government earns through performance, not through reciting a pledge.” (Reuters, Nov. 10)

We couldn’t agree more. It’s why, even without a pledge, the people of Cuba are so dedicated to their government—one that has provided free health care, full education and literacy for all, and that exports not guns but doctors to other countries. □

WWP’s history LGBT members welcomed

Continued from page 2

people. Those with the least to lose and the most to gain consistently show themselves to be the most highly enthusiastic about change, the most highly motivated to struggle for change, the most capable of sacrifice in the interests of furthering the struggle.

“Further, those who best understand the systems of exploitation and oppression are those with the most experience as the objects of that exploitation and oppression.”

Therefore, McCubbin stressed, “Having such a comprehensive, inclusive and intimate view of the working class, and promoting such a positive attitude toward the

most oppressed, it was a natural development that the party was able to attract lesbian and gay members even at its earliest stages of development.”

McCubbin concluded, “Of course, the recruitment of lesbian and gay people to the party in those early days was on the basis of this strongly positive and inclusive view of our class and a strong emphasis on sensitivity to oppression in general, and not, at least not in the early days, on the basis of a deep understanding of the oppression faced by lesbian and gay people.”

Next: “Solidarity Sam” vs. gay oppression
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Capitalist crisis of overfishing

By G. Dunkel

It was a stark warning. According to the Agence France-Presse, a Nov. 3 article in the journal Science threatened that “the world’s fish and seafood could disappear by 2048 as overfishing and pollution destroy ocean ecosystems at an accelerating pace.” (Nov. 2)

Since fish stocks naturally vary, sometimes in a drastic way, it took a four-year study by an international team of scientists to examine and analyze 32 experiments, studies from 48 protected marine areas and global catch data from the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, covering the years 1950 to 2003.

The scientists also looked at a 1,000-year time series for 12 coastal regions, using data from archives, fishery records, sediment cores and archaeology.

Mark Kurlansky, in his book “Cod,” described how the Vikings and the Basques began exploiting codfish stocks from the Grand Banks—shallow areas in the North Atlantic off the coasts of the United States and Canada—shortly after 1000 A.D. Canada closed its cod fishery in 1992, but cod stocks still have not recovered. Some ecologists believe that the marine ecosystem has changed in such a way that cod stocks in Canadian waters will never recover.

The lead author of the study in Science, Boris Worm of Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, told the AP: “Whether we looked at tide pools or studies over the entire world’s ocean, we saw the same picture emerging. In losing species we lose the productivity and stability of entire ecosystems.” (Nov. 2)

“At this point 29 percent of fish and seafood species have collapsed—that is, their catch has declined by 90 percent. It is a very clear trend, and it is accelerating,” Worm said. “If the long-term trend continues, all fish and seafood species are projected to collapse within my lifetime—by 2048.”

Worm and the team he led were surprised at these results, which were far more drastic than they expected at the start of their study.

The decline of fish stocks has had and will have serious consequences for the people employed in fishing, as well as the people who eat seafood. The high unemployment in Newfoundland, due to the collapse of the seafood industry in that province, has led tens of thousands of Newfoundlanders to migrate to labor-short Alberta.

The decline of fishing off of Senegal,

Gambia, Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau in West Africa has been an important factor in the perilous trips West Africans make to Spain’s Canary Islands, looking for a better life in Europe.

Worldwide fishing provides \$80 billion in revenue and 200 million people depend on it for their livelihoods. For more than 1 billion people, many of whom are poor, fish is their main source of protein.

Reactions to this study and to the problem have been mixed. Some voices, tied to the U.S. fishing industry, have tried blaming Indigenous peoples or cultures, or claimed that what is happening is just a normal fluctuation in fish stocks. Others have promoted a capitalist solution to the problem—for example, using a bidding process for catching quotas.

The Worldwatch Institute, which proclaims to provide “independent research for an environmentally sustainable and socially just society,” has just published “Catch of the Day: Choosing Seafood for Healthier Oceans.” The paper explains “how buyers of seafood—including individual consumers, school cafeterias, supermarket chains and large food distributors—can reverse fishery declines and preserve the fresh catch of tomorrow.” Yet this is throwing a worldwide crisis into the laps of individuals, and many of the institute’s suggestions, such as patronizing small-scale fishers, are a bit idealistic in the context of a worldwide crisis.

Certainly there are approaches that have some merit; fish farming is one of them. Chinese and Vietnamese peasants have been doing small-scale fish farming for 3,500 years. Quotas and licenses will limit the catch of commercially viable stocks, but might not touch the destruction of biologically important but commercially insignificant fish, which are often thrown overboard instead of being landed. Add the fact that the oceans are big and it is hard to catch or stop illegal fishing.

But what is really happening is the capitalist drive to maximize profits by maximizing production and minimizing costs. No individual capitalist can respect the limits imposed to preserve a “sustainable yield,” because their competitors might not, which would mean less profit and more risk. Small fishers have to grow larger or be ground up by floating factories.

The system of capitalist exploitation of natural resources has to be challenged. Measures must be promoted that will save these resources from depletion. □

Angola 3 case

Continued from page 3

investigation focusing on innocent men and prosecutors who lied and cheated to win convictions.

We are still several steps away from this decision resulting in Herman’s release. The commissioner’s recommended ruling will now be presented to the district judge, who has the power to adopt it as is (which routinely happens), amend it, or order further hearings. We are hopeful, given the strength of Herman’s case and the reasoning of the opinion, that the court will adopt the commissioner’s recommendation as it is written and overturn Herman’s conviction.

If the court overturns Herman’s conviction, it is likely that the Baton Rouge district attorney’s office will appeal that decision to the Louisiana Court of Appeal and Supreme Court, a process that could

take as long as two years. It is also possible that the state could seek to retry Herman, but we would vigorously challenge a retrial at this late stage as a violation of Herman’s constitutional rights. Moreover, considering the weakness of the state’s evidence, it is difficult to envision a retrial resulting in any verdict other than acquittal.

We spoke at length with Herman and his codefendant Albert Woodfox today. They are both overjoyed. Herman was able to personally notify several of his family members and friends, and he asked us to thank all of the dozens, if not hundreds, of people who have contributed to this cause over the years. Albert is hopeful that success in Herman’s case will help him, as he is just beginning the process of litigating a federal habeas corpus petition. We still have a long way to go before Herman and Albert are freed. □

As floods ravage East Africa

Kenya urges action at UN climate conference

By Deirdre Griswold

The timing could not have been more telling. Even as the United Nations’ Framework Convention on Climate Change was meeting in Africa for the first time, torrential rains began to pound Kenya, the host country.

Kenya’s Minister for Environment and Natural Resources Kivutha Kibwana had opened the convention on Nov. 6 with a dire warning: “Climate change is rapidly emerging as one of the most serious threats that humanity may ever face. ... We face a genuine danger that recent gains in poverty reduction will be thrown into reverse in the coming decades, particularly for the poorest people of the world and especially those in the continent of Africa.”

Kibwana urged negotiators to “take concrete actions on immediate priorities.”

The 6,000-plus convention delegates, representing 189 countries, then began a two-week process of debate and decision on what to do about climate change. But by Nov. 12, floods in Kenya had begun sweeping away roads and bridges and inundating towns and cropland, killing at least 20 people and displacing tens of thousands.

Just a few weeks earlier, the rains had pounded Ethiopia and Somalia to the north, also with deadly consequences. The rainy season, usually a welcome break for a region suffering from long-term drought, had turned into just another season of disaster.

“Africa is the least responsible for climate change but will be hit the hardest,” Nick Nuttall, spokesperson for the United Nations Environment Program, told Inter Press Service from Nairobi.

A new report released to the convention found that 70 million people and 30 percent of Africa’s coastal infrastructure face the risk of coastal flooding, linked to rising sea levels, by 2080. More than one-third of the habitats that support African wildlife could be lost. Crop yields will fall due to warmer temperatures and

more intense droughts.

Less than two decades from now, some 480 million people in Africa could be living in water-scarce or water-stressed areas.

Even though today’s rains are drowning Africa’s eastern regions, higher temperatures are drying up the sources of water for much of the continent. For example, the summer melt from the snowcap on Mount Kilimanjaro in neighboring Tanzania has fed streams and rivers for as far back as anyone can remember. But now the snow is nearly gone and drought is killing the cattle that the Masai people at the mountain’s foot rely on.

Nine years ago, the Kyoto accords were to set up a \$100 million Adaptation Fund to help poorer countries prepare for climate change. But the project has gone nowhere. There’s still no agreement on who will decide how the money is spent.

According to Kimani Chege, writing for nature.com news, “The European Union, Canada and Japan are pitted against developing nations concerned that countries that have not signed the Kyoto Protocol, such as the United States, will have a say in how the fund is managed, and that the money will come with too many strings attached.”

The United States, which produces 25 percent of the world’s greenhouse gases that are trapping heat and causing global warming, has refused to sign even the weak Kyoto agreement.

Chege continues: “The Adaptation Fund is linked to the Kyoto Protocol’s Clean Development Mechanism, which allows polluters to offset some of their greenhouse-gas emissions by investing in emissions-reducing projects in developing countries.

“In 2003 it was agreed that 2 percent of the proceeds from such projects would go into the fund. The fund is not yet operational, and contains only U.S. \$3 million.”

Over nine years, only \$3 million has been put into a fund that is supposed to serve developing countries all over the

world! In just a few hours, storm-related damage can cost much, much more than that in just one small area, draining funds away from development projects.

Chege adds, “The EU and many other industrialized nations want the fund to be administered by the Global Environment Facility, which is managed by the United Nations and the World Bank. But many developing nations oppose this, as the GEF is influenced by countries that are not party to the Kyoto Protocol [The U.S. and Australia—WW]. ...

“Developing nations also fear that funding will come with conditions similar to those commonly imposed by other multilateral funding agencies, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Typically, such conditions demand that recipients meet certain standards on good governance and human rights.”

This shows the utter hypocrisy of the “human rights” stance of the major imperialist powers. When the United States was a developing country trying to become independent, it was also a country that profited from slavery and attempted to exterminate the Native peoples. Had it been subject to the “human rights” litmus test, it could never have received the financing or military support from France that allowed it to break free of British colonial rule.

Today, Washington uses “human rights” as an excuse to hold back even the most minimal funding for a continent that is poor because its resources and even its people have been seized to enrich first the slave owners and then the capitalists of the United States and Western Europe. By any standards, the people of Africa deserve reparations, free of strings attached, to counter a problem caused by the exploiters of the world.

Stern report on economic impact

All of humanity has much to fear from global warming, according to a Review on the Economics of Climate Change

released on Oct. 30 by Sir Nicholas Stern. This report, commissioned by the British government, says that unless greenhouse gas emissions are substantially reduced, there will be a loss of between 5 percent and 20 percent of global gross domestic product by 2100. But this could be avoided by spending 1 percent—about \$450 billion—per year of world GDP today to keep greenhouse gas concentrations below 550 parts per million.

Spending \$450 billion to prevent catastrophic climate change may sound like a lot, but it is less than what the Pentagon spends every year on an aggressive military tasked with maintaining the dominance of U.S. banks and corporations around the world.

By comparison, the \$3 million that the rich, exploiting countries have put into the UN Adaptation Fund so far is trifling.

If a hurricane were to strike Long Island and devastate some of the mansions there, the insurance companies would have to come up with many billions of dollars to cover the damage. One estate alone, that of Ira Rennert in Sagaponack, has been valued at \$185 million—enough to bring green development to millions of people in poorer countries.

The Stern report doesn’t say it—he is, after all, “Sir” Nicholas Stern—but the problem is really imperialism and what it has done to the world.

Never before has there been such a concentration of wealth at one pole and poverty at the other. Never before has economic activity been driven so wildly by the search for greater profits, which in a capitalist society takes precedence over all other considerations.

What the Stern report does show is that a major effort by the developed countries could turn back the looming mega-disasters scientists now foresee.

To get there will take a global struggle by all committed people, especially the masses of workers and oppressed, against the present capitalist rulers of the earth.

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Congolese election and big capital

By G. Dunkel

The winner in the second round of voting for president in the Congo on Oct. 29 is scheduled to be announced Nov. 19. The voting dispute has broken out into violence between militias loyal to the current president Joseph Kabila and those loyal to Jean-Pierre Bemba, his opponent.

The most recent clash Nov. 11 in Kinshasa, according to a French radio reporter, saw heavy mortar and machine gun around Bemba’s residence. Some of the 18,000 United Nations troops in the Congo and the 2,200 European Union troops (EUFOR) in Kinshasa stepped in to “end” the fighting.

After the first round of voting in August, the forces siding with Kabila and Bemba fought for a few days in Kinshasa until the U.N. “peace keepers” imposed a truce.

The delay in counting reflects the disintegration of the Congo’s infrastructure due to centuries of colonial and neo-colonial rule. It has less than 300 miles of paved roads for a country the size of Western Europe and ballots often took days to get to a central counting station.

According to unofficial, partial results, Kabila has 60 percent of the votes tallied to Bemba’s 40 percent. The U.N. and the international financial community are hoping that this election will put an end to the civil wars in the Congo, which caused between 2 and 4 million deaths from 1997 to 2002. But it’s not really saving people’s lives that concerns them.

According to a widely printed AP story, “The biggest challenge facing Congo’s first elected government in nearly 50 years is bringing order to a chaotic mining sector

whose riches provoked a regional war that killed millions.”

The financiers of big capital say that the Congo has \$300 billion worth of mineral resources that could be tapped into over the next 25 years. They hope that the outcome of the election will bring about political stability to pave the way for them to more easily super-exploit this wealth that rightfully belongs to the Congolese people.

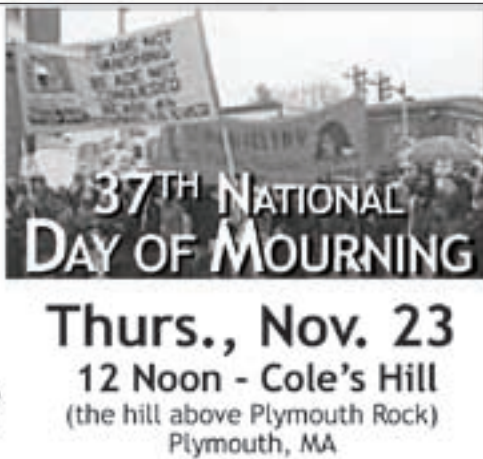
Bemba and Kabila campaigned around the same program—to improve the living standards of the Congolese people, to end

their devastating lack of economic development, education, health care and so on.

What distinguishes them is their backgrounds. Bemba and his family became multimillionaires under the regime of Mobutu Sese Seko, who was kept in power by U.S. and French imperialism from 1965 until his death in 1997. Kabila’s family lived in eastern Congo and in exile because his late father, Laurent Kabila, was one of the leaders in the struggle against Mobutu.

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Since 1970, Native Americans have gathered on Cole’s Hill to commemorate a National Day of Mourning on the U.S. thanksgiving holiday. Thanksgiving is a reminder of the genocide of millions of Native people, the theft of Native lands, and the relentless assault on Native culture. It is a day of remembrance and spiritual connection as well as a protest of the racism and oppression which Native Americans continue to experience.



Join us as we dedicate the DOM to Native political prisoner LEONARD PELTIER. Help shatter the untrue glass image of the Pilgrims and the unjust system based on racism, sexism, homophobia and war. Contact: UNITED AMERICAN INDIANS OF NEW ENGLAND/LPSG 617-282-5135 or 212-633-6646 for NY transportation information info@uaine.org www.uaine.org

EDITORIAL

Rumsfeld sacrificado

Hay gran satisfacción alrededor del mundo frente al despido repentino del Secretario de Defensa Donald Rumsfeld por parte de George W. Bush. Por seis años Bush alabó enormemente a Rumsfeld y lo defendió persistentemente ante todos los críticos. Apenas una semana antes de despedirlo, Bush había prometido al mundo que iba a retener a Rumsfeld hasta el fin de su período presidencial.

No obstante, el día después del desastre republicano en las elecciones de medio-término Bush inmediatamente se deshizo de su arrogante y odiado arquitecto de la invasión y ocupación de Irak en una abrupta ceremonia que duró menos de cinco minutos.

Toda la humanidad progresista aplaudió con satisfacción la expulsión del hombre responsable por los centros de tortura en Abu Ghraib, en la Base Aérea Baghrum y en Guantánamo; por su defensa de la política de rendición de la CIA; por las tácticas de detención en masa y encarcelamiento arbitrario de miles y miles de personas; por la implementación de la guerra y la ocupación que han costado cientos de miles de vidas iraquíes, y por la extensa destrucción de Irak y Afganistán.

Pero estas no son las razones por las que Bush lo despidió. La política de Rumsfeld es la política de Bush.

Entre los numerosos motivos para despedirlo está el hecho de que hace algunas semanas la administración de Bush oyó las resonancias contra la guerra del electorado. A pesar de las negaciones de Bush, él y Karl Rove sabían que sin duda los Republicanos iban a ser vencidos en las urnas. Buscando alguna manera de apaciguar el sentimiento contra la guerra en este país, Bush comenzó a negociar tras bastidores para encontrar a un nuevo secretario de defensa.

Rumsfeld fue despedido también a causa de una rebelión en el establecimiento militar porque él había ordenado realizar la Misión Imposible: el conquistar y subyugar a las masas anti-colonialistas iraquíes. Una serie de generales retirados llamó a la renuncia de Rumsfeld anteriormente este año. Pero el colmo llegó cuando el Military Times, uno de los periódicos de la corporación Gannet que refleja las opiniones de los jefes militares actuales, llamó a la renuncia de Rumsfeld dos días antes de las elecciones.

Sobre todo, Rumsfeld fue despedido porque la resuelta resistencia iraquí ha destruido la Doctrina de Rumsfeld. Esta doctrina concibe el ganar guerras a través del uso de tecnología avanzada, del despliegue rápido de fuerzas especiales, y del uso de poder aéreo masivo para “chocar y espantar”, evitando así recurrir al impopular reclutamiento militar obligatorio. Su doctrina subestimó completamente la tenacidad de los iraquíes anti-colonialistas para luchar contra la esclavitud.

Bush pudo retener a Rumsfeld solo hasta que se vio claro que las fuerzas estadounidenses en Irak habían ido de mantener un estancamiento, a perder todo el control en tierra — tanto en Bagdad como en otras ciudades claves.

El reemplazo de Rumsfeld, el ex-director de la CIA Robert Gates, que sirvió en la administración del primer Bush, es miembro del Grupo de Estudio de Irak. James Baker, un asesor en esa administración, y el ex-congresista Lee Hamilton, un demócrata, encabezan este grupo, cuya verdadera meta es encontrar una resolución para el imperialismo estadounidense en cuanto a su crisis en Irak.

Los líderes del Partido Demócrata, cuando que están obligados a decir lo que van a hacer sobre Irak, se refieren uniformemente al Grupo de Estudio de Irak y a su esperado reporte como si fuera la salvación mágica de la situación. En suma, los Demócratas no tienen ningún plan.

El dilema del imperialismo estadounidense en Irak es el siguiente: no se puede quedar porque la resistencia se está haciendo más fuerte cada día; pero tampoco se puede salir porque quiere evitar conceder su derrota (y no quiere dejar todo ese petróleo). El Pentágono es impotente para detener la resistencia pero la clase dominante teme ser un “superpoder” humillado por un ejército popular. Ningún grupo de estudios puede encontrar la salida a este dilema. □

La resistencia continúa en todo México

Por LeiLani Dowell

La resistencia continúa en el estado mexicano de Oaxaca, donde el movimiento popular se ha mantenido firme con sus demandas de remover al gobernador de ese estado. Mientras la represión ha llevado al aumento de muertes—17 al momento de este escrito—la solidaridad también continúa desde todo el país y del mundo.

En una victoria para las fuerzas populares, la policía federal que intentó entrar a la Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca el 2 de noviembre fue forzada a retirarse por l@s miembr@s y partidari@s de la Asamblea Popular del Pueblo de Oaxaca (APPO).

La universidad es un cuartel para el movimiento y el sitio de la Radio APPO—una fuente de información y comunicación. George Salzman escribió desde Oaxaca el 2 de noviembre: “Fue descaradamente declarado en la mañana del lunes [30 de oct.] en ‘las noticias’ del canal gubernamental Televisa, que el último transmisor fuerte aliado al movimiento del pueblo sería la prioridad más alta para la llamada Policía Preventiva Federal.”

APPO, una coalición de más de 350 organizaciones fue formada después de que el gobernador de Oaxaca, Ulises Ruiz ordenara a las fuerzas armadas a que rompiera el campamento de maestros del 15 de mayo en la plaza central de Oaxaca. Los maestros estaban demandando un aumento salarial al igual que en los fondos para la educación y la renuncia de Ruiz.

Laura Carlsen del Centro de Relaciones Internacionales reporta que, “de repente ya no hubo más punto medio en Oaxaca. Las comunidades indígenas se movilizaron por sus propias demandas, estudiantes y profesionales hastiad@s de la falsa democracia, vendedor@s ambulantes y trabajador@s se unieron a las filas de l@s maestr@s para exigir la renuncia del gobernador. ...Ahora han salido no sólo para protestar sino para construir. Redes de solidaridad, formas autónomas de comunicación y expresiones espontáneas de frustración y esperanza se han unido.” (americas.irc-online.org)

Marcha masiva en Oaxaca

Más de 20.000 personas marcharon hacia el centro del estado el 5 de noviembre exigiendo que la fuerza de 4.000 policías federales recientemente estacionada allí—ocupando la plaza que l@s manifestantes habían mantenido durante los últimos cinco meses—se retire de la ciudad. Un grupo de cerca de 400 personas

lanzó piedras y botellas a la policía, la cual estaba fuertemente armada detrás de barricadas de alambre de púas, con cañones del agua, niveladoras y francotiradores en las azoteas de los edificios. Otras personas formaron una “cadena humana” entre la policía y l@s manifestantes. Prensa Asociada reportó el 7 de noviembre que “La mayor parte de l@s manifestantes vinieron de aldeas agricultoras para expresar su descontento por la pobreza que les fuerza a emigrar a los Estados Unidos.”

Ese mismo día, l@s manifestantes que apoyaban la marcha en Oaxaca interrumpieron la misa del domingo en la catedral metropolitana de la Ciudad de México. Prensa Latina reporta que la policía abrió fuego en la Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez hiriendo a un estudiante.

El 6 de noviembre, cuatro bombas estallaron poco después de la medianoche en las oficinas del Partido Revolucionario Institucional, en el edificio del Tribunal Federal Electoral y en una rama del canadiense Scotiabank. Otras dos bombas sin explotar fueron encontradas; no se reportó ninguna lesión.

Mientras que algunos sospechan la mano de la derecha mexicana en los bombardeos, un mensaje de cinco grupos oaxaqueños asumió la responsabilidad, declarando, “Los responsables de la violencia social y política en nuestro país son la gente en el poder y con dinero que han desatado una guerra sucia neo-liberal contra el pueblo mexicano.” (Los Angeles Times, 7 de noviembre)

El Senado de México ha pedido a Ulises Ruiz que renuncie, pero él sigue rehusando dimitir.

Luchas unidas en solidaridad

A través del país de México varias luchas por la justicia están trabajando solidariamente.

El 20 de noviembre, día del aniversario de la Revolución Mexicana del 1910, Andrés Manuel López Obrador del Partido Revolucionario Democrático (PRD) será juramentado como presidente legítimo de México en una inauguración popular, después de unas elecciones manchadas de fraude y corrupción. La inauguración oficial de Felipe Calderón como presidente está señalada para el 1º de diciembre. La APPO ha anunciado que va a perturbar la inauguración del 1º de diciembre si las tropas no han sido retiradas de Oaxaca.

López Obrador ha nombrado ya su gabinete. Según la Convención Nacional Demócrata, incluye a Claudia Sheinbaum como encargada de la Defensa de Recursos

Naturales, que incluye a la industria petrolera nacional para salvarla de los intentos de privatización por parte de empresas extranjeras, y a Raquel Sosa para encabezar el Ministerio de Educación, Ciencia y Tecnología, “que tendrá como prioridad la defensa de la educación gratuita, laica y pública en todos los niveles”.

Y continúa diciendo que “La historia nos ha enseñado sobre las acciones criminales por parte de los diferentes gobiernos de los EEUU, ayudados por sus cómplices en países como Guatemala, El Salvador, Cuba, Chile, Venezuela, la antigua Yugoslavia e Irak, mencionando sólo algunas de las naciones que han sufrido la intervención abusiva de la Casa Blanca. ... Es sumamente importante seguir con nuestros esfuerzos para contrarrestar los ataques de la mafia derechista y retrograda apoyada por las poderosas corporaciones e instituciones bancarias”.

El PRD ha anunciado que va a requerir de nuevo un voto en el Senado para remover los poderes ejecutivos y judiciales en Oaxaca, y publicará un nuevo reporte sobre las violaciones de los derechos humanos por el gobierno de Ulises Ruiz. (Prensa Latina, 6 de noviembre)

Mientras tanto, el Comité Clandestino Revolucionario Indígena del Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN), Sexta Comisión, emitió una exhortación el 31 de octubre para acciones a nivel nacional en solidaridad con el pueblo de Oaxaca, incluso el cierre parcial, total, o simbólico de carreteras, calles, y aeropuertos mexicanos; y un paro general nacional apuntado para el 20 de noviembre.

Protestas también siguen a través de los EEUU.

El Centro de Acción Internacional, basado en los EEUU publicó una declaración el 3 de noviembre condenando los ataques en Oaxaca agregando que: “Acusamos también al gobierno de los Estados Unidos de complicidad en este gran crimen por permanecer en silencio. Lo que no es de extrañar pues es el mismo gobierno que ha declarado una guerra contra el pueblo mexicano tanto en México como en su diáspora, al aprobar 2,2 miles de millones de dólares para construir una pared de apartheid entre los dos pueblos. Estados Unidos es el verdadero culpable de esta situación por su robo al pueblo mexicano que comenzara con la toma de sus tierras y se ha continuado con imposiciones económicas como el NAFTA que ha destruido la economía que sostenía a millares de familias forzándolas al exilio particularmente hacia los EEUU. ... Asimismo enviamos nuestra firme solidaridad al pueblo oaxaqueño desde el corazón del imperio.” □